

# THE C4 NEWSLETTER

*Colonial Coin Collectors Club*

*Sommer Islands*



*Summer 2001*

*Volume 9 Number 2*

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Ads for this newsletter can be purchased as follows:

	1 issue	2 issues	3 issues	Copy size
1 page	\$50	\$75	\$125	4-1/2"x 7-1/2"
1/2 page	30	45	75	4-1/2"x 3-3/4"

If you want to include a photo with your ad at an additional \$10. Black and white photo needed, size can be adjusted to fit. Please send check with your ad. We can accept camera ready copy or any Microsoft Word compatible computer file.

All members also have the right to include a free classified ad in the newsletter of up to 13 lines.



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## ***Message from the President***

Ray Williams

I hope this newsletter finds you having a great summer, numismatically and personally. I received Angel's quarterly email requesting a president's message, and here goes...

The state of the hobby is as strong as its ever been. The number of active colonial collectors seems to be stable and probably about double what it was 10 years ago. In no other area of numismatics (IMHO) are the collectors as well read and knowledgeable as are colonial collectors. There are a number of active research projects in progress. Information has never been more readily available. The colonial e-groups are active and although most chat is about counterfeit halfpence at the moment, anyone can post questions and receive help from across the country.

Now is a good time to be active in collecting colonials. The only negative aspect that comes to mind is the price nice coins are demanding. Although information and books are available at a modest cost, Stack's O'Donnell Sale seems to have driven up the price of rare and/or high grade coins. It's been my philosophy to collect what I can afford with respect to rarity and condition and be content.

The next C-4 meeting will be held at the Atlanta ANA Convention

in August. I hope to see you all there. If you can, please bring a coin or two to share with us. See you then...

Ray Williams



## ***Dues Notice***

Many of you have already paid your dues for 2001. However, please check the date on your label to ensure this. If you see a "00" after your name, your dues for this year are pending. Please mail your check to me payable to C4. See details for dues on page 1.



## ***C4 Items for Sale***

### **The Copper Coins of Vermont**

#### **And Those Bearing The Vermont Name**

by Tony Carlotto

Regular edition price \$50 (add \$3 for shipping)

Send orders to:

**John Lorenzo**



### **C4 Convention Items for Sale**

***Hardbound Scott Barnes Catalogs \$50***

***Hardbound Third, Fourth, and Fifth C4 Convention Catalogues \$50/ea.***

***Call or write Ray Williams if you are interested.***

Add \$3 postage and handling. All will be sent uninsured at buyer's risk. If you want insurance, add an appropriate amount. Please

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forward your check to Ray, payable to C4, at the address below.

**Ray Williams**



### **Fugio Plates (NEW)**

Several copies of the Fugio obverses and reverses will be made available for sale at \$25 each set. They consist of three 8"X10" plates made from the original negatives used by Eric Newman for his book. They were made available to C4 courtesy of the Eric P. Newman Numismatic Education Society. If you want a copy, contact Ray Williams.

### **The Richard Picker Collection Lot Envelopes**

Stack's has provided C4 with Picker's own customized envelopes from his collection sold in October 1984. They are available from the club for \$5 each if you can show adequate proof that you own the coin. This \$5 donation is for the club's treasury, thanks to Stack's. All unsold envelopes will be returned to Stack's. If you own any of these coins and would like to own the envelope, contact Ray Williams.



### ***C4 Convention- Nov 8-11, 2001***

This year's convention will again be held in Boston at the Radisson Hotel in conjunction with the Bay State Coin Show.

McCawley and Grellman will hold another great auction on Saturday night. In addition, most colonial dealers will be present. Friday and Saturday will also have a number of educational activities.



Make your plans now. For reservations at the Radisson call the hotel at 617-482-1800 and ask for the Bay State Show room rates.



## ***London's View of the Wood's Controversy: Drive for Power and Failure of Arrogance***

By Brian L. Danforth, Ph.D.

There is a growing interest in William Wood's coinage and its use in the American colonies. In the Fall, 2000 issue of The C4 Newsletter I presented a revised perspective, documenting how Wood's Hibernias in spite of opposition were accepted in Ireland, becoming its dominant copper coin until 1736-1737 when they were semi-demonetized. Recently, in the 2001 issue of The Colonial Newsletter, I presented the events surrounding the importation of Wood's Money into the American colonies during the late 1720's and 1730's, especially into the Mid—Atlantic region.

Of added significance is the emerging distribution pattern for recovered Wood's Money as displayed by Philip Mossman in the April, 2000 issue of The Colonial Newsletter. As this inventory of discovery expands, it shall assist in underscoring the key role these fascinating coppers played in the American colonies.

### **INTRODUCTION**

In order to have a full understanding of Wood's Money, it is important that these coins be placed in their proper historical context as shaped by the politics of the period and Ireland's subservient role to England. The view from London was the driving force in determining Wood's fate. And the drive for power, arrogance, and the necessities of "High Politics" as practiced at the center of political power, the royal court, constituted the determining factors in unfolding events.

English politics of the era revolved around access to the King and to

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those close to him such as the Duchess of Kendal. One's handling of the court was the route to success. Robert Walpole, as the newly elected Prime Minister, acted out of what he perceived to be a necessity. In becoming Wood's strongest advocate, he supported George I and the interests of his mistress. Although Walpole took on an air of arrogance as he hardened to Irish opponents, he won acceptance at court. (1)

Based on Walpole's support, Wood also adopted an arrogant stance that propelled him into attacking his Irish adversaries in a most condescending manner. This formed the basis for Wood's repeated claim that he had influence with the King's Ministers, enabling him to act aggressively in importing his coppers into Ireland.

The combination of Walpole as a rising political star, driven by a desire for power, coupled with an influential industrialist who had paid the King's mistress a handsome amount for a controversial patent created a powerful force leading to Wood's Money.

## **WOOD SECURES A PATENT**

The immediate history of a Patent to mint coppers for Ireland begins with Lord Sunderland, who as Ireland's Lord Treasurer as well as England's Prime Minister, initiated the proposal. His power rested on his relationship with George I. The two men shared common ground in that both spoke French, which was the King's language of preference. Both were familiar with European Courts and shared a similar foreign policy that entangled England in European affairs that buttressed the King's position as a German Prince. By contrast, Walpole, as England's Treasurer, considered foreign exploits expensive and not in England's best interest. As a result, Walpole was kept at the edge of power.(2)

Although Walpole expressed reservations to the Patent because he felt that it would find displeasure in Ireland, the Patent was granted in 1721 to Sunderland who had a history of supporting controversial proposals for Ireland. Such was the power of Sunderland at the time that it was considered most imprudent to oppose it. Even future

leading Irish Parliament opponents to Wood, acquiesced in Sunderland's new acquisition.(3)

Sunderland did not see himself undertaking the new venture, but rather that it would be conveyed to others. At first, Lord Boulton, Ireland's lord Lieutenant, was offered the Patent. He declined, stating that it was too controversial. Then, it was given to the King's mistress, the Duchess of Kendal, who was the King's defacto wife since the Queen had been exiled from court due to her infidelity. The purpose of the gift can only be surmised, but it can be assumed that it was an attempt by Sunderland to redeem in part some of the power that he had recently lost due to his mishandling of the South Sea Bubble affair. In any event, the Duchess was known as a seeker of bounty, which she realized upon conveying the Patent to Wood for 10,000 L.(4)

At this juncture, a political shift occurred in English politics. Sunderland died and was replaced by Walpole as the leader of the dominant Whig party. Given his support in the House of Commons, Walpole was elected Prime Minister. However, as a commoner, he did not enjoy the same welcome at court that Sunderland had as a member of the nobility. Also, Walpole was estranged from the King due to Sunderland's tactics. These obstacles had to be overcome if he were to govern effectively. (5)

Addressing his weaknesses, Walpole began to consolidate his newfound power. The route was clear. He needed to ingratiate himself with the King, as well as with those in a position of power. In spite of his earlier opposition to the Patent, Walpole supported its passage through Parliament in early 1722. In this manner, he undertook the interests of the Duchess of Kendal.

### **LONDON IN DEFENSE OF WOOD**

In 1722, no one realized that the Patent would rise to the level of controversy that engulfed it. Opposition was slow in coming. But when it arose, it became the focus for Irish resentments due to England's prior acts in subverting Irish interests. As for Walpole,

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who decided to support the Patent in order to cement his rise to power, he was adamant that the Patent would be sustained. This single mindedness blinded him to the seriousness of the opposition, whose views he considered “frivolous.”(6)

Contrary to the Irish Parliament’s objections to Wood’s Money, the Prime Minister stated that:

“the Irish coin in finenesse(sic), exceeds the English...” and as to weight “was consider’d and found to be necessary for...the exchange of money between England and Irerand, is above 3 d. per pound of copper; the duty of importation, is  $\frac{1}{2}$  per pound; and the patentee then insisted, upon what he since found true by experience, that he should be obligated to make an allowance of about 10 per cent to such persons, as should take in Traffick(sic), quantities of this money at first, to issue and circulate in Ireland.”(7)

This perspective underlined the general view that the Irish were: “absurdly wrong that I can only laugh at them. Can any one in his right judgment think the King will part with his unquestionable prerogative for such weak objections’...The King is touched more nearly, and feels his honor highly concerned in the affair.”(8)

As the controversy deepened, Walpole’s position hardened as he viewed the opposition as attackers of the King and a threat to the Duchess who was a beneficiary of the Patent. Although a defender of the Crown, Walpole believed that if the matter were “rightly turn’d” it would assist him politically.(9)

In support of the Patent, Walpole undertook several steps that were deemed as acts of necessity to sustain his position. First, he informed George I that he should not yield in the matter as it would be a sign of weakness.(10) The king as a foreigner, was defensive of his rights, and sided with this opinion to the fullest extent. Next, Walpole instructed Lord Grafton as the Lord Lieutenant for Ireland to stem the mounting controversy and support the implementation of the Patent. And, when it was perceived that Grafton “knew not what he had to doe (sic)” after he advised Walpole that the Patent should be rescinded, he was replaced for being a “fair weather pilott (sic) ”.

(11) Next, Walpole appointed Lord Carteret as Lord Lieutenant and mandated that he resolve the issue. Walpole's intent was for Carteret to:

“exert his authority, bring people to a temper and a sense of their duty, and convince them of the great error and infatuation that they...labour under.”(12)

Although Walpole considered Carteret a political foe who “flings dirt upon me”(13) and an intriguer with the Irish anti-Wood faction, the Prime Minister entrusted the resolution of the controversy to him. It was known that Carteret was respected in Ireland and had influence with its Parliamentary leaders. Furthermore, due to Carteret's friendly ties with Lord Midleton, Ireland's Controller, this new appointment might address a political subplot that also gripped Ireland wherein the two top royal representatives in Dublin, Grafton and Midleton, competed to “shew (sic) who has the most credit” with the King.”(14) The resolution of this conflict was desired since Midleton was prone to encourage Wood's opponents as a means to discredit Grafton. Thus, either the issue would be resolved or Carteret in failure would be destroyed. Either way, Walpole would reap a benefit.

Walpole's arrogance at this point matched that articulated by Wood. It is well known that Wood boasted of his influence among London's Ministers. In addition to his often quoted claim that he would “cram his brass down their throats” (15) his other assertions which are less known today were of great concern to his opponents. At one point, Wood claimed that the 1723 Irish Parliament's analysis of the weight of his coins was not only in error but also based on the use of counterfeit coins. This outraged Irish officials. Further, Wood claimed that his influence was great enough that he could double the number of his coppers during the initial phase of production, signaling to his opponents that he might arbitrarily increase the mintage beyond what was already deemed excessive. Such arrogance heightened recklessly the concerns of his opponents. Then came his statement that he could obtain a royal Proclamation to elevate the status of his coppers to that of regal issue. Wood acted as if he feared no ill consequences. Although Irish opponents

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reacted to such arrogance in stunned disbelief, their concern grew as London took steps to enforce the Patent.(16)

Carteret undertook an aggressive stance in support of the Patent. This surprised Irish leaders, but was well received in London. Carteret's first act upon arriving in Dublin was to issue a Proclamation that he would prosecute the Drapier (Jonathan Swift) for his latest pamphlet entitled A Letter to the Whole People of Ireland which was considered:

"a Wicked and Malicious Pamphlet...in which are contained several Seditious and Scandalous Paragraphs highly Reflecting upon His Majesty and His Ministers, tending to Alienate the Affections of His Good Subjects ...and to promote Sedition among the People."(17)

As an alternative to arresting the Drapier, Carteret prosecuted the publisher. This gave rise to the infamous Harding Trail. While that proceeding ended in a hung jury, other printers were placed in jail.(18) The intent was to silence the opposition through intimidation. And it worked. Even Swift admitted that he had laid himself open to charges of sedition, which was a hanging offense. Further, Irish political leaders who had been outspoken in their opposition to the Patent became concerned. Of note was Lord Midleton. After the Harding Trail, Midleton stated that matters had gone too far and as a result he might be removed from office. Unknowingly, Walpole had already received permission from the King to remove Midleton, but deferred until matters quieted.(19) Thus, by late 1724, at the conclusion of the Harding Trail, opponents realized that London was exerting its power and that they might be crushed in the process. The telling point came when the King issued: "Orders to the Commissioners of the Revenue, and all other Officers in Ireland, to revoke any Orders, Directions, Significations, or Intimations whatsoever, that have been given for obstructing the receiving and uttering of Mr. Wood's Copper Money."(20) If they refused, they would be removed from office. By this act, Wood's coins were assured a degree of currency and laid the groundwork for their ultimate circulation.

## **PATENT ABANDONED**

As “High Politics” supported Wood, it laid the basis for the ensuing compromise that ended the controversy. After the Harding Trail, it was obvious a resolution had to be found.

For Walpole, it was important to bring closure prior to the Irish Parliament reconvening in 1725. He needed that legislature to pass revenue bills. At the same time, the Irish Parliament, while acting less hostile due to London’s intimidating actions, had enough fight in it to threaten an inquiry into how Wood had obtained his Patent. The first problem endangered his ties with the King who was in need of Irish funds. The second threatened to expose the Duchess of Kendal. Failure to control those two potential problems would jeopardize Walpole’s position at court. At the same time, Walpole could not rescind the Patent for “Wood has not transgressed against it.”(21) That would have questioned the King’s right to coin coppers. A reversal on this stance would have constituted political suicide. Further, he came to believe that the only way to enforce Wood’s Patent to its fullest extent would have been through military force. But he could not place Ireland under siege. (22) Such an act would have inflamed Irish nationalism and stirred sentiments for the Pretender, placing at risk the claims that George I had to the throne. This was unthinkable. In the end, Walpole sought resolution.

Wood was ready to concede. It was generally assumed by advocates and opponents alike that 108,000 *L.* in coppers was excessive. He had offered to reduce the amount to 54,000 *L.* Lord Carteret suggested the final sum of 40,000 *L.* Then there was the issue of compensating Wood for his efforts. Hugh Boulter, Primate to Ireland and a close ally to the Prime Minister, suggested that Wood be offered a payment if he surrendered the Patent, saving London the political embarrassment of taking it from him. The agreed upon terms were that Wood would give up his Patent and receive an annual stipend of 3,000 *L.* for eight years. This payment exceeded what was believed to be Wood’s profit in the venture, thereby appeasing Wood for his troubles. (23)

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As for the Irish opposition, sentiments were divided. Many were intimidated by Walpole's actions. Lord Midleton went so far as to resign as Ireland's Controller, deeming the future prospects of his family more important than the fate of copper coins. He summarized the change in sentiments:

"I wish this matter were once well over...the government should think fit to oppose force to force, what a condition wjll this country be in? Nobody can tell what follyes (sic) the populace may be guilty of, nor how far their behaviour may provoke the government to proceed to chastise and repress them...If things continue long in the uncertainty they seem to be in at present. I think the country will suffer extremely."(24)

A compromise was struck. As if consenting to a gentlemen's agreement, all parties lessened their public outcry. It was felt that each combatant could claim victory out of the ensuing silence. And indeed that is what happened. The matter went away and Woods coppers remained in Ireland until their general export to the American colonies.

### **CONCLUSION**

The Wood's controversy began and ended as a result of the necessities of "High Politics" at the royal court. Walpole in his drive for power had to address the concerns of both the King and his mistress. His advocacy in supporting Wood intensified as Irish voices rose in opposition. Even at the height of the conflict, he never waived from his belief that the dispute was but a cover for those who wanted to damage his administration:

"It is not new to see small matters aggravated and carried to a very great height, but these things seldom happen by chance, and when there is in reality little or no reason to complain, nothing but secret management and industry can kindle a general flame... That this is the case in Ireland, I have never doubted from the first beginning of the clamour ..... (25)

At all times, Walpole's stance was predicated on his view of Ireland as but an English appendage whose role was to serve London's



interests. This arrogance blinded him to conceive of Wood's coppers as "better than ever was in Ireland"(26) At the same time. Walpole's stance catered to Wood's belief that he had the support of London's Ministers, which sustained him in his drive on behalf of his coppers.

As Lord Midleton stated in regard to London's stance:

"instead of carrying matters on with temper and prudence and good manners...chose to act with hauteur..."(27).

And later he wrote:

"London...still to believe, that the granting the patent, and all that had been done by the lords to whose consideration Wood's petition was referred, and Wood (sic) his manner of executing the powers granted to him, and every thing done in England in this matter were right, and every thing done here had been wrong...and that even giving Wood...a compensation for his patent... would look like a victory obtained by us here; and I fancy they insisted on Ireland being contented..."(28)

In the end, Wood received a profit. The Duchess of Kendal was saved from an embarrassing inquiry into her sale of the Patent. The King's prerogative to coin coppers was preserved. Wood's Irish opponents claimed a victory over the Patent for it was surrendered. Walpole continued his drive for power, becoming the most notable English Prime Minister of the eighteenth century. And Ireland got an infusion of coppers that were needed by the "Common Man" for daily transactions whose counterpart in the American colonies shared in a few years later.

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## *Sommer Islands Sojourn*

By Jeff Lipsky

A cruise to Bermuda! In the normal person's mind this conjures up visions of pink sand beaches, gentle sea breezes and snorkeling in deep blue waters. All I could think about were crude copper coins with a hog on one side (odd for someone who keeps Kosher) and an old sailing ship on the other. I was determined to view all of the Sommer Islands coinage I could find in its native habitat.

We (my wife and I) left Saturday from New York aboard the cruise ship *Horizon*, a tired old ship where things often didn't go quite right and no one seemed to much care. After an uneventful day and a half at sea we arrived at the town of St. George. I had received a tip last year at the ANA in Philadelphia that an old church in a small town in Bermuda had two Sommer Islands coins, possibly threepences, on display behind Plexiglas. The person who gave me the tip didn't remember the name of the church or the town. After scouring through a travel guide on Bermuda, I determined it had to be St. Peters Anglican Church in St. George.

After the ship docked we made a beeline to St. Peters church with great anticipation. We climbed the steps out front and entered the dimly lit ancient church. The guidebook said several old silver pieces were on display in a vault with a glass door in a vestry behind the main altar. I figured this must also be where the coins were. The church is neatly kept, quite attractive, and still in use. The whitewashed walls are covered with commemorative plaques and there are dark cedar pews and woodwork. I walked quickly to the main altar at the back of the church and found the door to the vestry shut and locked, with none other than fellow tourists in sight. I was crushed; this had been the central focus of the trip.

While I was wandering around the church in anguish my wife walked over to a small building to the right of the church and knocked on the door. A woman answered, my wife asked if she was with the church, she acknowledged that she was and my wife explained to her our plight. The woman said that the person who

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usually served as a tour guide had needed eye surgery and was off duty for several days. The only other person with a key to the vestry was the Rector who had just gone to the post office. The woman said she would relate our situation to him when he returned. I sat patiently on a pew by the locked vestry door while my wife kept an eye out for the Rector.

A short while later my wife walked over and informed me she had talked to the Rector. He was trying to find the key and would join us. Soon the Reverend Anthony W.L. Hollis, a very pleasant man of approximately 60 years, joined us. He is a native of Bermuda and has been Rector for the past 10 years. I mentioned the coins to him and he said yes, they have some old copper coins that had been found under the floor of the church when it had been replaced because of rotting in the early 1950's. Nobody knew anything about them and I was the first person to ask. He unlocked the door and then went outside around to the back of the church to another door to disable the alarm. He reentered the vestry through that back door, walked to the door in front of which we were standing, opened it and invited us to enter. He shut the door behind us.

The vestry is a room that was added to the church in the late 1700's. It is about 15 feet by 9 feet with a loft overlooking part of the room. At the back wall was a large safe, about 6 feet by 2-1/2 feet. Reverend Hollis unlocked and opened the vault door. Behind the Plexiglas were five copper coins on a small plate along with hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of silver chalices and other silver pieces, some which had been presented to the church by past Kings of England.

I hardly noticed the magnificent silver pieces; my attention was riveted to the five copper coins of various sizes. I had purchased a Macro lens for my camera before the trip hoping that my wife could sufficiently illuminate the coins by shining a flashlight through the Plexiglas for me to get a few good pictures.

Instead the Reverend unlocked and opened the Plexiglas door and handed me the plate of coins to examine. I was in Hog Heaven! The

coins were stuck down on some transparent yellowed substance (olive oil?) to the bottom of the plate, but we were able to pick them out of this to examine. I was the first numismatist to have the chance to study these coins. They all appeared to have been coated with olive oil or some similar substance to help keep the coins from deteriorating in the humid salt laden air of Bermuda.

The first coin I examined was a beautiful Sommer Islands shilling, large sail variety, in extra fine condition. The shipside was exceptionally strong. This may be the finest known specimen and only the 5 or 6 known.

The second piece I examined was a Sommer Islands sixpence in good to very good condition with some pieces of the outer flan missing as they often come. The hog is easily recognizable and that side is in good shape; however, the reverse is quite corroded and I could not determine the porthole variety.

The third piece was a puzzler. A very fine sixpence but clipped to the inner ring around the Hog making it about the size of a threepence. It was quite a bit thicker than the other coins. It appeared to be the large portholes variety. Why would someone clip a coin made out of base metal? Was this possibly done to bring the weight to the standard for a sixpence?

The fourth piece was a Sommer Islands twopence in fine to very fine condition. Probably the large sail variety. There was some odd coloration on the reverse, possibly due to the oil. The ship was quite detailed and the planchet was smooth.

The fifth coin was heavily corroded. It was the same size as the twopence and I could just make out the two and only two Roman numeral I's on the obverse.

We spent several relaxing hours talking to Reverend Hollis about the history of the church, St. George and Bermuda. We also shot two rolls of film hoping to get some good pictures of the coins. We said goodbye to the Reverend promising to send him a copy of this

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article when it was published. We returned to the ship, a very successful first day in Bermuda.

Our second day in Bermuda started with the ship moving from the port of St. George to Hamilton, the capitol. We slept in (after all, it was vacation.) and did not leave the ship until 2:00 p.m. The **Bermuda Monetary Authority** was just a block and a half from the cruise ship terminal and we scurried over in hopes of viewing some of their Sommer Islands coinage mentioned in their 1997 book, **COINS OF BERMUDA**. We found only a few cast copies on display in the lobby with a sign saying the originals could not be displayed because they would deteriorate. I asked to speak to someone about the coinage. There was no one I could talk to. I explained I was writing an article about the coinage, still absolutely no interest in helping me out. The only suggestion the attendant had was for me to go to the coin shop in the next block and inquire about Sommer Islands coinage there. So we did.

The coin shop is called **Portobello**. It is in the **Emporium on Front Street** and is the only coin shop in Bermuda. The proprietor did not have any Hog money nor had he ever. (He did not have any U.S. colonials either.) However, he was talking to a gentleman who was also a coin dealer in some fashion. This man had been born in Bermuda but now resided in Europe most of the year. He wouldn't give me his name and was skittish about talking at first, but after awhile he informed me that his family had been in Bermuda since 1628. Through a convoluted series of bequest he had wound up inheriting two Sommer Islands shillings, a sixpence and a twopence in fine condition. He did not know the variety of any of these and kept them sealed in a vault in London. He said the climate of Bermuda is too hard on coins to keep them there.

From the coin shop it was on to the main branch of the **Bank of Bermuda on Front Street**. On the mezzanine level in five blue velvet line cases reside the Bank of Bermuda and the E. Rodovan Bell coin collections.

The Bank of Bermuda collection is in four of the cases. They have gold, silver and copper coins from James I forward. The bank has displayed seven Sommer Islands shillings, at least one of each variety, ranging in condition from very good to very fine. There are also seven Sommer Islands sixpences, at least one each large portholes and small portholes ranging in condition from very good to very fine. Additionally displayed are one Sommer Islands threepence, Hog side up, in very fine, and two Sommer Islands twopences, one extra fine, Hog side up and the other very good, Ship side up.

The safety deposit vault is next to the coin display. Mrs. Woolridge is the attendant and she was extremely helpful. She gave me a copy of a book listing all the coins on display. She also put me in touch with Mr. David Lang of the bank who spoke with me at length over the phone. He was also quite helpful. He explained that Spink and Sons of London formed the collection some time ago for the bank. I asked him if there were any way I could view the reverse side of the coins. He said not. The atmosphere in the cases is nitrogen and the humidity is precisely controlled. The Bank also has fifteen copies of Sommer Islands coinage; some gold, some silver, some in copper and none are deceptive.

The Bank of Bermuda collection also contains several United States colonial coins in excellent condition. Included are willow tree, oak tree, and pine tree coinage; Lord Baltimore coinage; in what would be of great interest to John Griffie and Stan Stephens a St. Patrick's halfpenny in fine to very fine and two St. Patrick's farthings in very fine to extra fine. There were also pre-federal coins of the states, Chalmers pieces, two Continental Dollars and several other very nice pieces.

The E. Rodovan Bell collection is in one case. The Sommer Islands portion of his collection contains two shillings, two sixpences, a threepence and a twopence all of different die varieties I believe. The shillings are very good to fine the sixpences are also very good to fine, the threepence is very fine but a little rough, and the twopence is very good corroded

Viewing all these coins on display next to the safety deposit box vault, I couldn't help wondering how many more fascinating coins were locked up in there. We returned to the ship, another day of viewing complete.

The next morning (Wednesday) we arose early, ate breakfast and set out for the Bermuda Historical Society on Queen Street. They have their Sommer Islands coins on display in a case along with several other coins. There was a Sommer Islands twopence in very fine condition on a light tan pock marked planchet. There was a sign by it reading presented by Mrs. R.S. McLaughlin. There were two sixpences, one Hog side up that showed some bright color that may have been from cleaning or from rubbing as a pocket piece. It was in good to very good condition. The other was a small porthole variety in fine with verdigris and a small ragged hole near the middle. The curator was not in and could not be reached by phone, but the gentleman on duty suggested that we "pop" in later and he would "ring up" the curator again. He suggested that we go to the Bermuda Archives located in the basement of the government building two blocks away to search for information on the Sommer Islands coinage.

We walked to the building and proceeded to the basement. I explained what we were looking for and the archivist looked up a file, which contained several articles on the coinage, which she Xeroxed for me. After this we returned to the ship for lunch.

After lunch we "popped" back into the Bermuda Historical Society. This time the attendant Was able to reach the curator by phone. The curator, Mr. Colin Pembow said the twopence had been the collection for approximately thirty years and the sixpences even longer he thought. A few years ago he had loaned them to the Bermuda Monetary Authority for study. The Monetary Authority's 1997 book lists the twopence but does not list either sixpence.

This left only one lead for viewing Sommer Islands coinage in its native habitat. This was at the Bermuda Maritime Museum located



at the former Royal Naval Dockyard. We walked to the ferry terminal next to the Bank of Bermuda and purchased tokens for a round trip to "Dockyard." (By the way, these tokens come in both white metal and copper.) After a twenty-minute ride we arrived, clambered up the gangplank and ambled over to the museum, which now encompasses the fort like structure (complete with a moat) that used to be the keep of the dockyard.

We tracked down the curator, Charlotte Andrews, who was quite helpful. She rounded up some printed information for me on the Castle Island find of Sommer Islands coinage, which is normally housed in a climate-controlled facility at the Maritime Museum. This find consists of three shillings and sixteen sixpences excavated on Castle Island and belong to the government of Bermuda. Unfortunately they are not currently on display. They have been out for over a year for study by the government. Charlotte hopes they will soon return to their home at the Museum where the public can enjoy them.

This exhausted all of my leads to find Sommer Islands coinage to view. With just one day left in Bermuda I promised my very patient wife that we would spend that day sightseeing and shopping for the children.

In summary, the trip was all I could have hoped for as for viewing Sommer Islands coinage, except for the specimens controlled by the Bermuda Monetary Authority where the reception was frigid.

The number of known or reported Sommer Islands twopences has jumped from twelve to fifteen dropping it from R-7- to R-6+, probably headed to R-6. However, I did not even receive a whiff of information about anymore threepences lurking about, thus with seven known examples, it's R-7 rating is safe for the present.

If there is interest among club members, I would be glad to lead a half hour or hour educational session at the next C4 convention on Sommer Islands coinage. I could copy and pass out some of the information I gathered in Bermuda and we could start a census of all

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known specimens of each die variety similar to what Ray Williams does with the New Jerseys.



## ***A Study of NJ Varieties R5+ or Better***

By Dennis Wierzba

John Griffée, in his original study of higher rarity NJ varieties, combined collection surveys with auction appearances to list all known pedigree information. This process may give a high estimate of survivorship, as an auction appearance may be double counted in the collection survey. Likewise the high estimate may NOT be the maximum as the collection survey is *not complete and some specimens go unreported*.

Using data from auction catalogs and from Ray Williams in his NJ Condition Census, I have developed minimum and high estimates for survivorship of NJ varieties R5+ or better. The comments on the Griffée survey also apply here. I believe one can count the actual number of specimens for these better varieties. I will address the more common varieties in a future article.

There is a perception problem by determining rarity from specimens in the marketplace. Assume that there are 25 NJ variety collectors. One variety has a true population of 26 and another 30. All things being equal, the new collector, number 26, will see 1 of the first and 5 of the second variety. His perception would be that the second variety is five times more common than the first (both are R6-) Relative availability is NOT a good proportional estimator of rarity rating. As the number of variety collectors increases (and assuming they will report their holdings), the collection survey will gain completeness for the better varieties.

I am employing the colonial rarity scale in my reporting as described below:

**CR1 or R1: Greater than 350 (>SHELDON/EAC R3+)**

**CR2 or R2: 201-350 (=SHELDON/EAC R3+)**

**CR3 or R3: 138-200 (=SHELDON/EAC R4-)**

**CR4 or R4: 76-137 (=SHELDON/EAC R4+)**

**R5-: 53-75**

**R5+: 31-52**

**R6-: 22-30**

**R6+: 13-21**

**R7-: 8-12**

**R7+: 4-7**

**R8: 2-3**

**R9: 1**

The CR (Colonial Rarity) designation has been introduced as an option to clarify that the Sheldon/EAC scale is not being used. However, in the context of describing a colonial copper, the R1-R4 notation may be sufficient.

One consequence of this study is the distribution of owner-assigned technical grades for a nearly complete population. However, this methodology is biased toward the higher grades as grade information comes from nicer specimens found in both collections and auction catalogs. My rounded percentage results, which has this bias, is given below:

UNC-1.2%, AU-2.6%, EF-6.5%, VF-29.4%, F-26.8%, VG-20.4%, G-9.9%, AG-2.2%, FR-0.6% and POOR-0.5%.

Using Michael Wierzba's NJ condition census and making aggressive projections on survivorship of AU specimens for some R1 specimens, my estimate of surviving NJ AU-UNC specimens is just 295. Using an AU-UNC population percentage of 3.8%, I get a low estimate of the surviving NJ total population to be 7763. Using the midpoint values of the colonial rarity scale and my estimated NJ rarities, I get a count of nearly 13,000 NJs. Given a mintage of 3 million (plus some unauthorized specimens), the surviving percentage is 0.43% or less. This is a far cry from the Breen 3% survivorship "rule-of-thumb" for early copper.

Below is a summary of all the population data I compiled. Astute readers will notice that high estimate for the 12-I, 19-M, 21-O, 21-P, 49-f and 55-l exceed 52. I have kept these varieties as R5+ as the spread between MIN and HIGH is wide and there may be sufficient double counting to keep the rating for the present. I have not seen the 29.5-L or the 72-aa for the record.

**NJ VARIETIES R5+ TO R9**

<b>VAR</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>MIN</b>	<b>HIGH</b>	<b>VAR</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>MIN</b>	<b>HIGH</b>
<b>7-C</b>	R9	1	1	<b>35-J</b>	R6-	18	25
<b>7-E</b>	R7+	6	6	<b>35-W</b>	R7+	5	5
<b>8-F</b>	R8	3	3	<b>36-J</b>	R7-	11	11
<b>8.5-C</b>	R8	3	3	<b>37-J</b>	R6-	23	31
<b>9-G</b>	R7+	6	6	<b>37-X</b>	R7-	12	12
<b>10-G</b>	R6+	15	16	<b>38-L</b>	R9	1	1
<b>10-h</b>	R7-	8	8	<b>38-b</b>	R6+	18	21
<b>10-gg</b>	R8	3	3	<b>40-b</b>	R5+	32	38
<b>10-oo</b>	R9	1	1	<b>41-c</b>	R5+	27	37
<b>10.5-</b>	R9	1	1	<b>42-c</b>	R5+	34	48
<b>C</b>							
<b>11-G</b>	R9	1	1	<b>42.5-c</b>	R9	1	1
<b>11-H</b>	R5+	29	36	<b>44-c</b>	R7-	9	11
<b>11-hh</b>	R9	1	1	<b>45-d</b>	R5+	32	51
<b>11.5-</b>	R7-	11	11	<b>47-e</b>	R6-	25	28
<b>G</b>							
<b>12-I</b>	R5+	37	54	<b>47.5-e</b>	R8	2	2
<b>13-J</b>	R6-	20	27	<b>48-X</b>	R7+	4	4
<b>15-U</b>	R5+	29	40	<b>49-f</b>	R5+	34	53
<b>16-J</b>	R6-	19	33	<b>51-g</b>	R6-	25	34
<b>16-S</b>	R9	1	1	<b>55-l</b>	R5+	33	57
<b>16-d</b>	R7+	4	4	<b>57-n</b>	R6+	17	17
<b>18-J</b>	R5+	27	39	<b>59-o</b>	R5+	26	38
<b>18-L</b>	R9	1	3	<b>62-r</b>	R8	2	2
<b>18-N</b>	R5+	25	37	<b>62.5-r</b>	R9	1	1
<b>19-M</b>	R5+	36	59	<b>64-u</b>	R5+	26	43
<b>21-O</b>	R5+	36	61	<b>64.5-r</b>	R9	1	1
<b>21-P</b>	R5+	38	55	<b>66-u</b>	R7+	4	4

<b>21-R</b>	R7-	10	11	<b>66-v</b>	R5+	31	44
<b>21.5-R</b>	R8	2	2	<b>69-w</b>	R8	2	2
<b>22-P</b>	R7-	7	9	<b>70-x</b>	R7-	12	12
<b>23.5-R</b>	R8	3	3	<b>71-y</b>	R6-	23	25
<b>24-I</b>	R8	3	3	<b>72-z</b>	R6-	20	30
<b>24-M</b>	R7+	5	5	<b>72-aa</b>	R9	1	1
<b>24-Q</b>	R7+	4	4	<b>73-aa</b>	R5+	34	48
<b>24-R</b>	R5+	28	42	<b>73.5-jj</b>	R9	1	1
<b>25-S</b>	R5+	27	38	<b>74-bb</b>	R6-	21	31
<b>26-S</b>	R5+	28	37	<b>76-cc</b>	R7+	4	4
<b>26-d</b>	R8	2	2	<b>79-ee</b>	R8	3	3
<b>27-S</b>	R5+	31	38	<b>80-ff</b>	R9	1	1
<b>27-j</b>	R6+	14	17	<b>83-ii</b>	R7-	8	8
<b>29.5-L</b>	R9	1	1	<b>84-kk</b>	R9	1	2
<b>34-v</b>	R6-	25	30	<b>85-nn</b>	R9	1	1



## ***St. Patrick's Coinage Projects***

By John Griffiee

There are two projects underway regarding St. Patrick's coinage.

- 1- Stan Stephens (address in front of newsletter under club officers) is preparing a reference listing of all known coins in the hands of US collectors.
- 2- I am working on a book on these coins. It will cover more than you ever wanted to know about St. Patrick's coinage, including early history, facts about Marc Newby, enlargements of all known die varieties (at least 200 or more), and an attribution and rarity guide.

Well-known photographer and copper expert, Bill Noyes, is the official photographer for both of the above projects.

Please help us with these two projects. Let me know if you have

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any of these coins, even if your collection contains only one of these coins. Stan and I will see how we can have your coin(s) photographed. Bill attends the C4, EAC, and FUN conventions, plus a limited number of additional shows on both the East and West coasts.

I look forward to hearing from you soon.

John M. Griffiee



### **Unclassified Ads**

Ed Sarrafian



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1787 Verm. Ry. 14 MBR F "nice"

1788 Verm. Ry. 25 MBR VF uniformly porous but not distracting

1776 Jan 1 issue Delaware 10s currency AU-UNC (some would call it UNC)

I will consider trades

LEO SHANE

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**Summer, 2001**

Revised quantities for rarity 1,2 and 3. Corrections to the rarity ratings (yes, there will be some) will be announced in the C4 Newsletter over the years. This is a long term, evolving project.

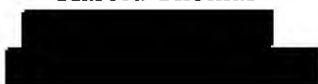
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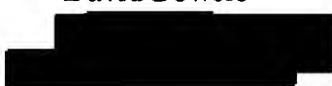
Wanted: Back copies of the C4 Newsletter. Also wanted are back issues of Coin World, Numismatic News, and any other periodical covering US numismatics.

Contact: Harold Thomas



I desire to correspond with anyone who has an interest in the tokens, medals, dies, craftsmanship, biographies, and other aspects of Boston engraver Joseph H. Merriam and Springfield engraver James A. Bolen. Also, I would like to purchase and would pay full retail price for any Bolen colonial copies of different metals and mulings that I do not presently have. Correspondence is invited.

David Bowers



WANTED TO BUY: Talbot, Allum and Lee 1794 cent, No New York in EF or better condition.

Harrell H. Cherry







Barry Tayman and I, under a grant from the ANS, are working on a monograph on Canadian Blacksmith tokens. We are seeking information from collectors, especially about the rarer pieces. I can be contacted at my home address or through my web site.

George Fuld, Sc.D.



[Fuld1@home.com](mailto:Fuld1@home.com)



Imitation halfpence coppers (Redbook group I, II and III) in VF to EF condition. All dates wanted.

Please call Min at [REDACTED], or E-mail at [Unifilis@aol.com](mailto:Unifilis@aol.com)



Wanted, cull to mid-grade:

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Colonial and Continental currency

Also wanted: biographical information on the lesser known signers of Continental and colonial currency. Will pay for referenced information I don't have.

David Consolvo



[historiccoins@firstva.com](mailto:historiccoins@firstva.com)



*Summer, 2001*

I am currently researching Massachusetts Bay Colony silver coinage. Any information or new thoughts which are not addressed in the basics (Noe, Crosby, Breen, Durst, etc.) would be appreciated. Intermediary die states, contemporary counterfeits, high quality fabrications, witch pieces, etc. Correspondence desired. Also buying low grade, clipped, holed, mutilated, witch pieces. Thank you.

Geoffrey Stevens



Pattinbpt@mediaone.net



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Collector wishes to purchase for top dollar: 1793 Liberty Cap cent, AG to F; Immune(Immunis) Columbia; Chalmers shilling; Auctori Plebis; Oak Tree Shilling; Rhode Island Ship Medal; Pitt token. These coins will be cherished. Thank you. Frank Vivalo- [REDACTED]



Richard August



Wanted: Rare die varieties or choice grades of: Massachusetts copper and silver, Vermonts (especially Ryder 30 to 39), Machin Mills 1/2d, Fugios, New Jerseys, Connecticut; also colonial currency and medals.



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